



The President's Daily Brief

30 January 1973

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

30 January 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Fighting continues throughout South Vietnam, but is less intense than in the period immediately following the cease-fire. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] (Page 1)

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In Laos, inconclusive fighting continues on several fronts. The Communists hold open the possibility of a cease-fire by mid-February. (Page 3)

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[REDACTED]
(Page 4)

On Page 6 we describe Chinese defensive preparations to improve their military posture along the Sino-Soviet border.

In Chile, President Allende has reacted to open disagreement between the Communists and the Socialists by blasting extremist Socialist leaders and implying that he can get along without them if they choose to withdraw from the government coalition. (Page 8)

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[REDACTED]
Jordan [REDACTED]

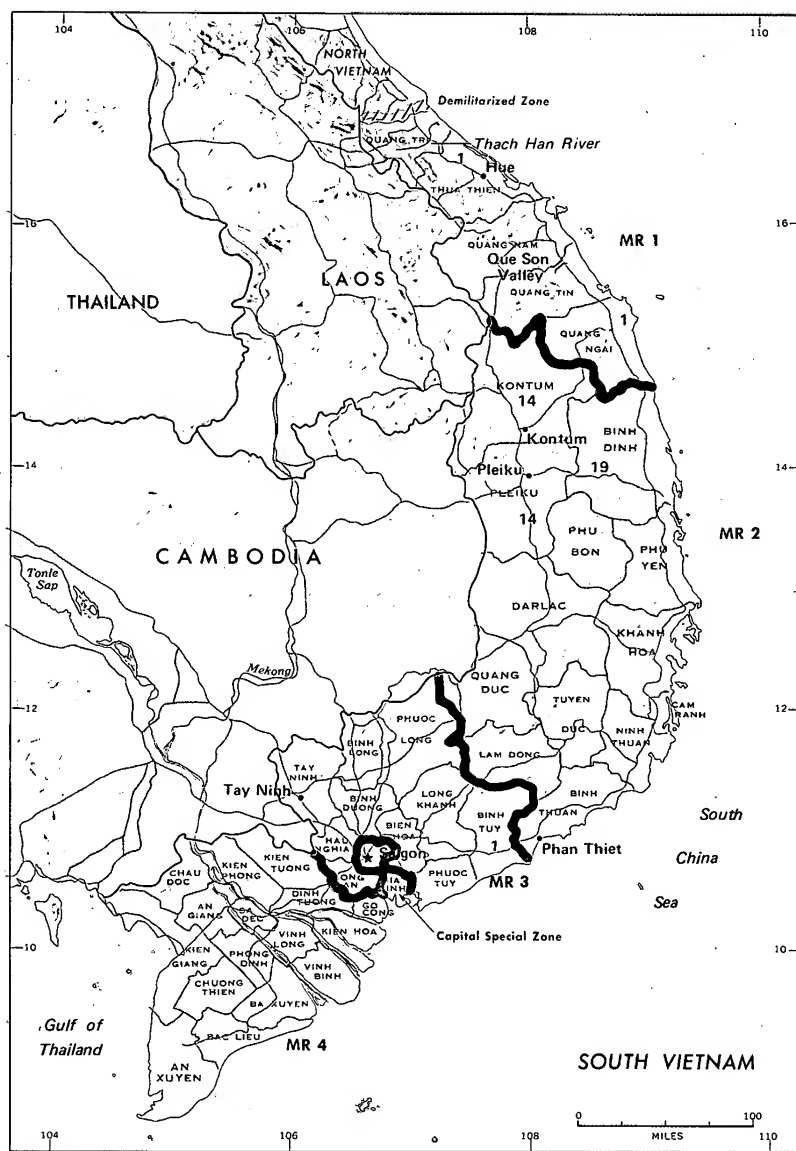
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SOUTH VIETNAM

Fighting continues throughout South Vietnam, but is less intense than in the period immediately following the cease-fire. The government is still trying to break Communist roadblocks and drive North Vietnamese from villages seized just before the cease-fire while the Communists are attempting to increase their holdings in the countryside.

Major areas of activity are north of the Thach Han River in Quang Tri Province, several locations along Route 1 and in the Que Son Valley, and around Tay Ninh City. At least two highways are closed in this last region by Communist roadblocks.

In the central highlands sections of Routes 14 and 19 are reported to be under Communist control. Skirmishing continues along the coast from Binh Dinh Province south to the provincial capital of Phan Thiet in Binh Thuan Province.

Activity in the delta is now relatively small scale. The government reports all main roads and canals open and claims that it has driven Viet Cong units out of 25 of the 50 places which were overrun immediately before the cease-fire.

There have been no confirmed new deployments of major North Vietnamese or Viet Cong military units since the cease-fire went into effect. According to intercepted messages, Communist units are still being told to engage in combat only to defend themselves.

No new infiltration groups have been detected moving south since the cease-fire, but Communist resupply activity continues in the Laos panhandle. Numbers of vehicles have been noted on the move there, vehicle and artillery camouflaging has been detected, and logistics units have been instructed to position antiaircraft artillery to protect supply lines.

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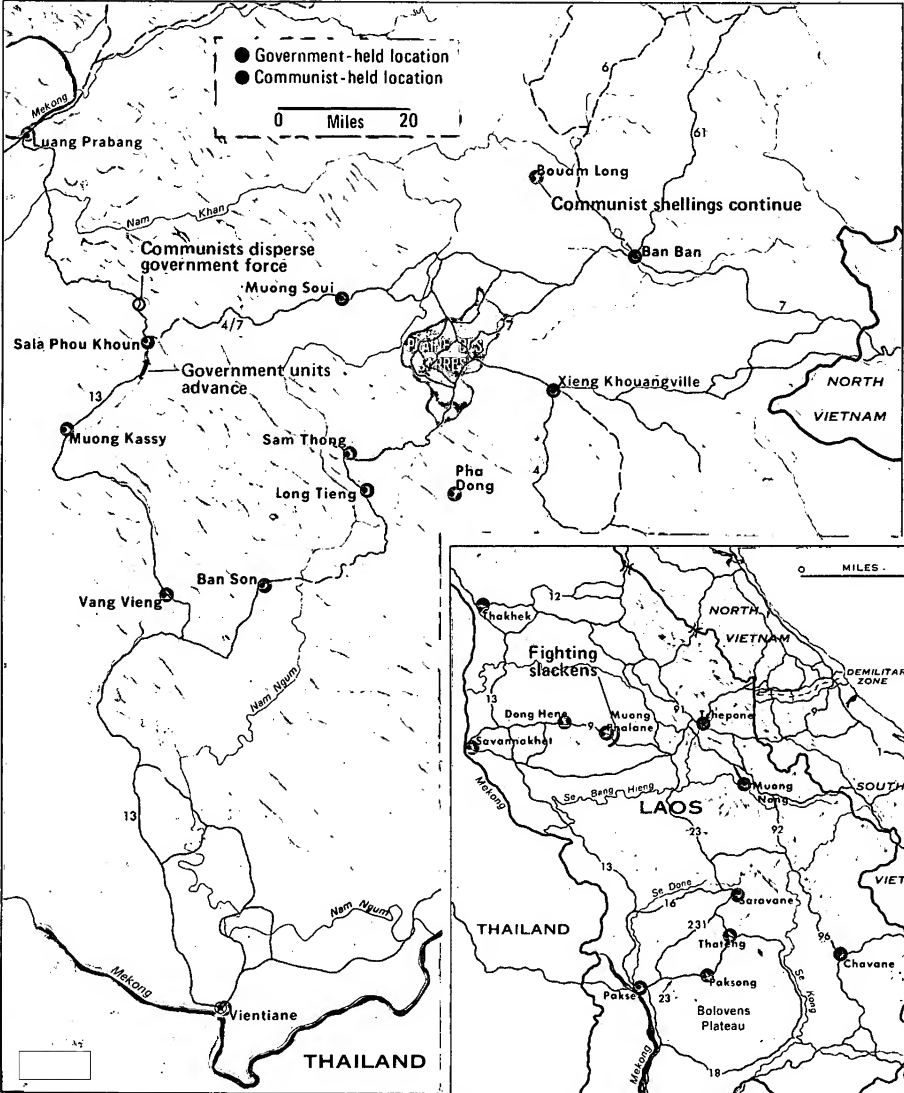
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Peking has sent a message to Hanoi and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam strongly endorsing the Vietnam agreement and urging the Communists in South Vietnam to take steps--in concert with the Saigon government and neutralist elements--toward holding elections there. The message, which was signed by both Mao and Chou En-lai, also expressed Peking's wish that Hanoi concentrate on political and economic development within North Vietnam and pointedly omitted any mention of Hanoi's efforts elsewhere in Indochina.

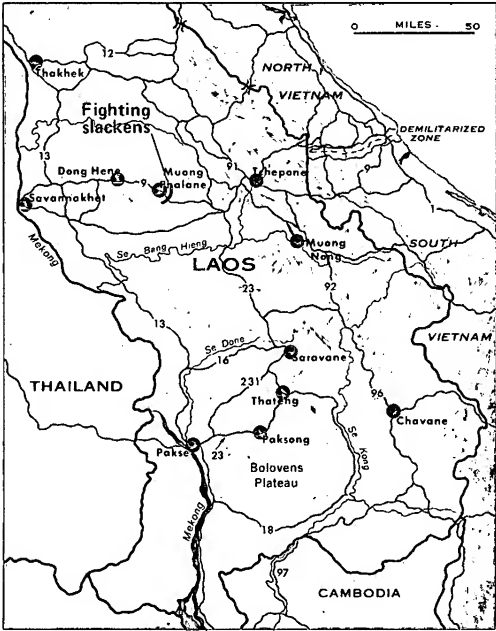
The message made no mention of continued armed conflict. Like the editorial carried by the People's Daily on 28 January, it gives the strong impression that the Chinese are anxious to see the struggle move into the political arena.

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LAOS



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LAOS

Inconclusive fighting continues on several fronts. Communist gunners have increased their shelling of Bouam Long, the government base north of the Plaine des Jarres, but US and Lao air strikes appear to have slowed preparations for a ground attack. To the west, government forces are still trying to regain control over sections of Route 13 north and south of Sala Phou Khoun--the road junction secured by irregular troops last week. Fighting has slackened around Muong Phalane and farther south, but North Vietnamese troops remain active in the vicinity of Thakhek, a provincial capital on the Mekong.

Communist chief negotiator Phoune Sipraseuth returned this weekend to Vientiane after ten days of consultations in Hanoi and at Lao Communist headquarters in Sam Neua. Although he was unable to say when Phoumi Vongvichit, the high-ranking special adviser to the negotiating team, would return to Vientiane, he did hold open the possibility of a cease-fire in Laos within 15 days.

At today's talks the Communists offered three new proposals--a meeting in the near future between Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma and Pathet Lao leader Souphanouvong, the resumption of private procedural talks between the two deputy chairmen, and daily meetings beginning tomorrow between several top representatives of both sides. A Lao Government source described the atmosphere at today's session as completely different from that which has prevailed at previous ones.

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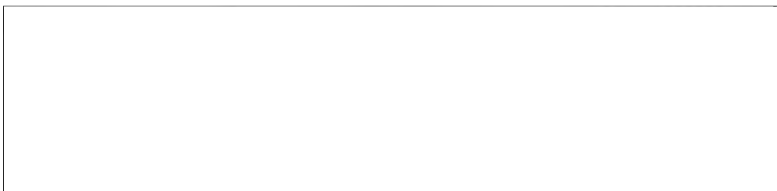
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The government has not yet responded to the Communist proposals. Souvanna Phouma, before leaving Laos for India over the weekend, however, had instructed his cabinet to draw up detailed arrangements for a cease-fire.

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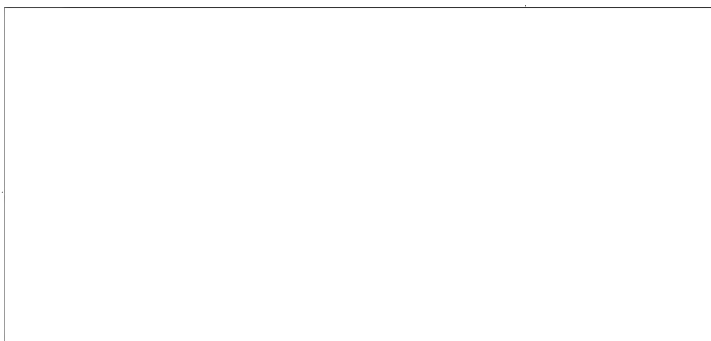
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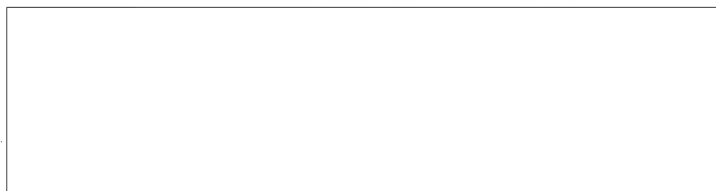
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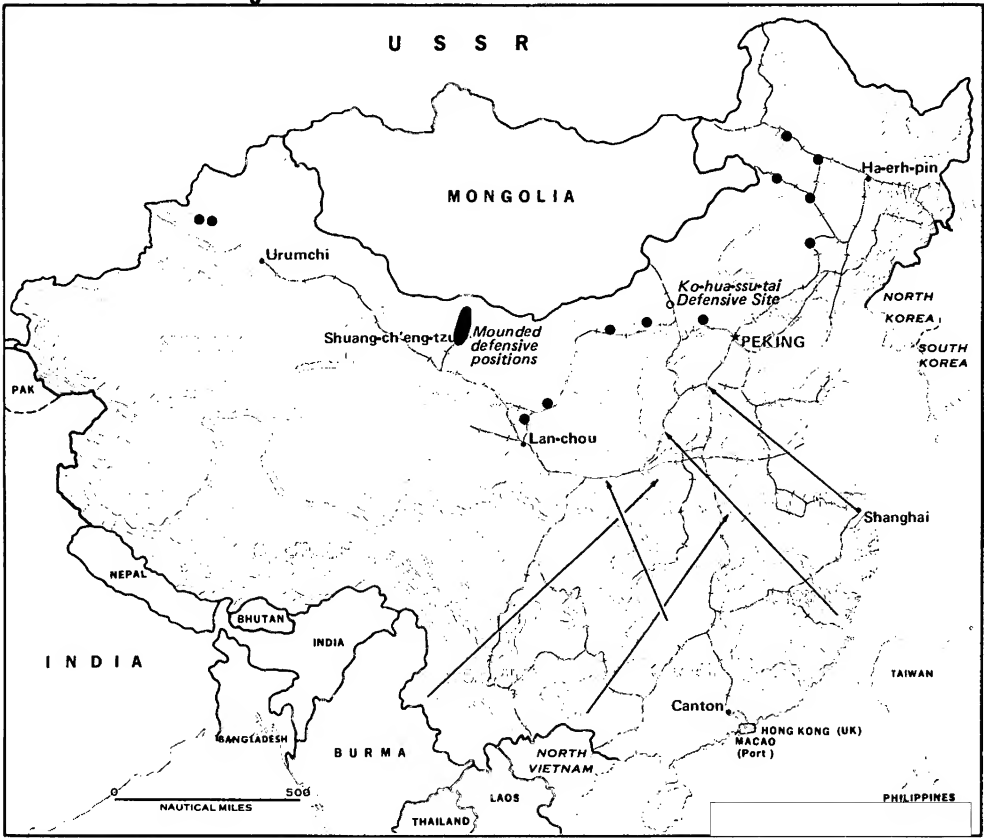
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China: Defense Along the Soviet Border



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● Defensive area
← Army redeployment

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CHINA

The Chinese, like the Soviets, are improving their military posture along their common border. Today, China has 1.3 million men under arms (about 80 divisions) arrayed in defensive positions in depth to meet any Soviet threat. In addition, about 1,800 combat aircraft--including MIG-19 jet fighters, IL-28 light bombers, and TU-16 medium bombers--are positioned in north China, well away from the borders. Most of China's defensive preparations have taken place since 1969, while the Soviets have been steadily increasing their forces since the mid-1960s. There are now 39 Soviet divisions across the frontier.

Only in the O-Chi-Na Valley north of the Shuang-cheng-tzu missile test center, did the Chinese begin construction of defensive positions before the border clashes of 1969. Between that year and 1971, Peking added five armies from south and east China to the 13 armies already in the border regions.

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China's ultimate strength against a Soviet invasion remains "people's war"--the mobilization of the entire population to fight the invader. Gradual modernization of the Chinese military forces, however, has enabled Peking to plan for major resistance farther forward than was practical a few years ago. China's preparations, particularly in Inner Mongolia and in the Khingan Mountain Range, are evidence of a major effort to meet a Soviet invader with strong forces as far as practical from major population and industrial

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centers. In most cases, the Chinese are making effective use of favorable terrain features to enhance the defensive capability of their forces.

We have no indication that the Chinese are preparing for offensive action against the Soviet Union. They appear to be well aware of their serious disadvantages compared with the heavily mechanized, modern Soviet forces.

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CHILE

Chronic dissension between the cautious Communists and the extremist Socialists and their allies has again erupted into the open--less than five weeks before the important congressional elections. President Allende has reacted by blasting the extremist leaders as "disruptively extremist"

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These plans do not depart from Allende's previous strategy, although in the past he has often found it expedient to defer to extremist pressures despite his preference for the less disruptive Communist line of action.

Allende's compromises with the military since they joined the cabinet in November have not reversed his basic program, but have slowed it enough to infuriate the extremists, particularly the Socialists. Allende would find life a good deal easier without the troublesome "support" of these extremist leaders.

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NOTES

Jordan-Fedayeen: [redacted]

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Syria-Fedaveen: [redacted]

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Ethiopia: [redacted]

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USSR-Bangladesh:

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USSR: A Soviet scientist recently acknowledged that his institute has been conducting weather modification experiments for the armed forces. The Soviets have operated a large weather modification program for civilian purposes for more than 20 years and have conducted successful programs to dissipate fog and suppress hail. Fog dissipation techniques are now used regularly at several airports. In the broader area of climate modification, the Soviets are believed to be still in an early research and development stage.

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